



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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\$20 Million Approved for Upper Mississippi Restoration

***Successful Preservation and Protection Program Receives
\$1 Million Increase over Last Year's Funding***

Washington, DC –U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), Co-Chair of the Upper Mississippi Task Force, announced today that the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program (UMRS-EMP) will receive \$20 million for 2006. The funding, which is included in the FY 2006 Energy and Water Development conference report, represents an increase of \$1 million over last year's appropriation.

"The EMP has been enormously successful in preserving the health and vitality of the river system and in offsetting damages to the environment caused by the construction of navigation and flood control projects," stated Rep. Kind. "The funding provided in this bill will enable the continued protection and preservation of the Upper Mississippi River, encompassing 1,200 miles of river real estate."

The EMP, authorized by the 1986 Water Resource Development Act, is designed to evaluate, restore, and enhance river and wetland habitats along a 1,200-mile stretch of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Managed by the Army Corps of Engineers in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey, the EMP is one of the nation's most effective habitat restoration programs.

Earlier this year, the House voted to approve the President's proposed \$33.32 million for the EMP. Kind spearheaded a letter from the Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force to appropriators requesting that full funding be preserved. The letter also expressed the Task Force's concern that funding cuts would accelerate the decline of river habitat and interfere with scientists' efforts to understand long-term trends in the river system.

"While this funding is an improvement over last year's budget, it falls short of the \$33 million that the President proposed in the budget and that I pushed for," Kind stated. "Given the importance of this program, full appropriations in the future will be crucial for the timely realization of the program's goals and objectives. I remain fully committed to my efforts to ensure that the restoration of the Upper Mississippi remains a top priority in Congress."

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Kind has been the leading supporter of the EMP since he was elected to Congress in 1996. As founder and co-chair of the Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force, Kind has been active in promoting the vast benefits of the EMP in Congress and has consistently advocated for full level funding. The Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program, headquartered in Onalaska, conducts research, data collection and wildlife habitat restoration on the Upper Mississippi River.